



STATE SENATOR • LIZ BRATER • 18TH DISTRICT

Brater Press Release

P.O. Box 30036 • Lansing • Michigan • 48909-7536 • Toll-free 866-305-0318
E-mail: senlbrater@senate.michigan.gov • 517-373-2406 • Fax: 517-373-5679

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CONTACT: Sen. Liz Brater (D-Ann Arbor)
(517) 373-2406

BRATER SUPPORTS AQUIFER MAPPING LEGISLATION

Works to include funding for new program

(LANSING)—The Senate today passed legislation that would require reporting of groundwater aquifer withdrawals in the state of Michigan. The intention of the legislation is to protect aquifers, and the Great Lakes they connect to, from depleting valuable water resources.

“I voted to support Senate Bill 289 and I think we are headed in the right direction,” said Senator Liz Brater (D-Ann Arbor). “However, there is still much work to be done if we really intend to protect our vital groundwater. This bill has major flaws that, if not corrected, will limit its effectiveness.”

Senate Bill 289 requires that any withdrawal of water over 100,000 gallons per day, over any consecutive 30 day period, be reported to the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ). Any non-agricultural person withdrawing groundwater would also be required to pay a water use reporting fee of one hundred dollars. The DEQ would use the fees collected to prepare a statewide groundwater inventory and map, which would provide a way to study the sustainability of the state’s groundwater use and determine if additional oversight is necessary.

“Mapping and studying groundwater use in our state are essential,” said Brater. “Water is our most precious resource in Michigan. I completely agree with the spirit of this legislation and worked closely with the committee chair to develop a bill that would be useful and effective. Unfortunately, we fell a little short, since the bill does not include any funding to support the services required by the bill.”

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One of the main concerns with Senate Bill 289 is that there is no funding source identified for the program. The DEQ will need an additional source of money in order to appropriately implement this program. In addition, those withdrawing water for agricultural uses will not be required to report all of the same information as other users, nor will they be required to report their data to the DEQ. They will report to the Michigan Department of Agriculture. Senator Brater introduced a number of amendments during today's floor debate that would provide the necessary funding and close the gaps that the bill left open, but all were defeated.

"I'm glad we were able to take this first step in protecting Michigan's groundwater," said Brater. I'm disappointed that we couldn't give this bill the teeth it needs to be truly effective, but I remain confident that we can work together in the coming weeks to find ways to improve this legislation."

Senate Bill 289 now moves to the House of Representatives for their consideration.

Senator Liz Brater represents Senate District 18, which includes the Cities of Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti, the Villages of Barton Hills, Chelsea, and Dexter and the following Townships: Ann Arbor, Augusta, Dexter, Freedom, Lima, Lyndon, Northfield, Salem, Scio, Sharon, Superior, Sylvan, Webster, and Ypsilanti. She is the minority vice chair of the Natural Resources and Environmental Affairs Committee and the Agriculture, Forestry, and Tourism Committee. In February 2003, Senator Brater was appointed by Governor Granholm to serve on the Michigan Land Use Leadership Council. Senator Brater is known statewide as a leader on environmental issues.

Editor's Note: Sen. Brater's most recent photo is available for download at the following link: <http://www.senate.michigan.gov/dem/Graphics/pressphotos/SD18BraterPortrait.jpg>

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